

August 18, 2011

Lookout Answers Your QuestionsWhat Does the Law Say?

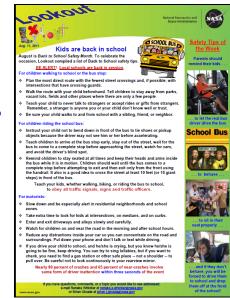
The Aug. 11 edition of *Lookout* provided some back to school safety tips. It did not address Florida laws regarding driving near or around school buses. However, a concerned reader submitted the following question:

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"If the school bus is traveling in the opposite direction of a divided highway, do drivers have to stop?"

Section 316.172, Florida Statutes, states: "The driver of a vehicle upon a divided highway with an unpaved space of at least 5 feet, a raised median, or a physical barrier is not required to stop when traveling in the opposite direction of a school bus which is stopped in accordance with the provisions of this section."

WARNING! Painted lines, pavement markings, and one- or two-way left-hand turn lanes do not constitute a barrier.





The "Emergency Vehicles and Security Escorts" article in the June 16 edition of *Lookout* quoted the Florida Statute requiring drivers to stop for emergency vehicles. A *Lookout* reader asked for clarification regarding the article:

"If you are traveling on a two-way road (one lane in each direction) and an emergency vehicle is coming behind you, you pull over as described in the law. However, is it just courtesy or is it law that the vehicles in the on-coming (other lane) traffic heading toward the fire truck to also pull over?"

The Florida Highway Patrol confirmed that Florida Statute 316.126 affects all vehicles on the highways regardless of traveling direction or whether or not it is a divided median highway.

The statute states, "the driver of every other vehicle shall... yield the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle and shall immediately proceed to a position parallel to, and as close as reasonable to the closest edge of the curb of the roadway, clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed, unless otherwise directed by any law enforcement officer." This is a mandate for all drivers.

Did YOU Know



A Brevard County school bus crashed on the first day back to school last Wednesday. The Florida Highway Patrol reported that the 67-year-old bus driver was transporting 26 students to Viera **High School** Wednesday morning when he experienced some kind of medical episode and lost consciousness. The school bus veered off the road and into a retention pond. The front end of the bus submerged itself in several feet of water while the back end remained on land. The students exited the rear emergency door. Thankfully, no one was seriously injured. For safety tips concerning school bus safety, check out the Aug. 11 edition of Lookout at http://sotl.ksc.nasa.g ov/